

## **A Eulogy to the Years I'm Living**

I miss a life I never had  
One with its weight in unshed tears and 'if I could go back'  
With easily kindled stomach drops and shaky hands  
Full of overdramatic stress and wide-eyed romance  
Classroom disappearances for breakdowns in marker-stained school bathroom stalls  
Long, friendless nights and inescapable inner wars  
Treasured hand me downs and never just rights  
Early bus mornings and weekend blurs  
And smiles laced in between

The life laid out for me welcomed loneliness, familiar like slipping your hand into your  
back pocket  
Running from it, I left behind the 'remember whens' too  
Now nostalgia grows up without me  
I jumped to twenty-one from fifteen

## Systematic Beauty

Oh whoops! You caught me at a bad time. No, we can't do this now.  
Let me lose ten pounds, do my hair and get my eyebrows done. Gimme a month. Gimme a month to feel like I'm worth more. Not worth more to me, but to you because I don't do this for me, we rarely do, I do this for you. Instead of feeding my mind with literature, culture and the things I love, I focus on not feeding my body, my face shape, my nose for you. This is how you like me, accept me, see me, and I need you to see me. You don't like me? You're gone and so am I because the me I was was for you. But were you there at all or did I craft your voice in my mind and decide it was you, called it you, believed it was you? I had help crafting it, years of help from my dolls to the apps on my phone. Something funny, something funny is that I didn't know I was doing it for you, staring in the mirror for you. I told myself it was for me and deep down I knew the lie wouldn't work some days and on those days I said nothing to myself at all. What's wrong with my chest? What's wrong with my thighs? The more I tried for you, sucked in for you, the more things I found wrong, But I'm not wrong And I'm focused on the least interesting things about me. But how can I not? Because Kens love Barbies and because of the fact that I turn on my screen every day. How can I stop? Do you like me? Either way, deep down, I'll fear that you don't.

## POPSTAR

Yesterday I began to sing  
The days came and went and I still wept for my voice to slip out like silk  
I picture clouds and imagine myself in the white feathers, smiling, and smiling, and singing  
I am okay where I want to be enchanting  
Better is day by day like zipping up the back of your dress by yourself, frustrating, slow  
Nothing is linear, not even a zipper  
I'll admire myself in my dress, a photoshoot in the mirror  
Think about this dress in front of the lights  
Voices belting out their hurt, crying at how full they feel, tingly everywhere and flying with their  
feet on the ground  
The girl in the mirror seems different sometimes  
She doesn't seem to glow as much  
She appears stripped of the lights, and the dress, and the forever smile in her mind  
All that's left is dark skin girl  
dark skin girl can't glow in a dress, not one glittery and beautiful  
Only a tight one  
Why would she pick up a ukulele? Why would she pour her heart out about feeling small?  
She is strong and her music is smooth or spoken  
Who would want to see her otherwise?  
Be full everywhere you need to be and small everywhere else  
Be sexy or be nothing  
Choose *girl*  
Otherwise, there is no place for you in the clouds and your unzipped dress will barely be loved  
by the mirror